

We claim:

1. Apparatus comprising:  
5 a plurality of serial bus controllers;  
a serial bus coupled to the plurality of serial bus controllers;  
an arbitration mechanism for controlling access to the serial bus by the plurality  
of serial bus controllers, the arbitration mechanism comprising redundant control lines.
- 10 2. The apparatus of claim 1 wherein the arbitration mechanism further comprises:  
A circuit in each of the serial bus controllers for monitoring the control lines to ascertain  
whether the serial bus is in use.
3. The apparatus of claim 2 wherein the arbitration mechanism further comprises:  
15 A circuit in each of the serial bus controllers for driving the control lines for a  
predetermined period of time if the serial bus is not in use, and for then releasing the  
control lines and monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the control lines are  
being driven by another controller.
- 20 4. A method comprising the steps of:  
Providing a serial bus coupled to a plurality of serial bus controllers;  
Arbitrating for access to the serial bus by the plurality of serial bus controllers by driving  
redundant control lines.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether the serial bus is in use.

5 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

driving the control lines for a predetermined period of time if the serial bus is not in use,  
and then releasing the control lines and monitoring the control lines to ascertain whether  
the control lines are being driven by another controller.

10 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of arbitrating further comprises:

Taking control of the serial bus if it is ascertained that the control lines are not being  
driven by another controller.